



Durham Constabulary

Press Release

February 15, 2012

WARNING OVER FRAUD CALLS AFTER ELDERLY COUPLE CONNED

Police are advising people to be alert for a money-raising scam operating in County Durham. The scam involves a phone call from someone claiming to working for a company calling themselves Ministry of Justice. They claim they can recover bank charges, credit card charges and cash associated with mobile phone contracts.

They ask the recipient of the call to send money through U-Cash vouchers or Western Union moneygrams to an address in New Delhi. The amounts of money which are requested start off small and gradually increase. A couple in their 70s who live in Carrville, Durham, recently reported to police that they have paid £19,000 over the last five months.

DS Cliff Down from Seaham CID said: "This is definitely a scam and it's been operating in other parts of the country. It appears the fraudsters are now targeting people in County Durham. It has left this elderly couple seriously out of pocket and extremely distressed; some of the calls were quite intimidating.

"We must advise in the strongest possible terms never to hand over any money in this way as a result of phone calls, and never pass on your bank details over the phone. If you receive any calls from people claiming they can recover bank or credit card charges, tell the police immediately. If you have any suspicions about any requests for money, please tell us or, if you prefer, you can contact your local trading standards department."

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Anyone with information should contact Durham Constabulary on 101 and ask for Seaham CID or ring the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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